

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 1904

BY
CHARLES N.
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THE CUSTER BATTLEFIELD

PHOTOS BY
LEE
MOORHOUSE

COL. E. S. GODFREY,

IRONTAIL, IN CUSTER FIGHT.



WHERE RENO CROSSED.

"HAT," said the major to me, handing me a cartridge shell, "came from Custer battlefield. I was over there in Wyoming the other day and picked it up."

"I had two of them," he continued, "but Colonel Godfrey, from Fort Walla Walla, was in to see me only this morning and I gave one to him. It brought back sad times to him, too, for when I told him he could have it he put it to his lips and cried. That's an uncommon thing for a soldier to do. We had a long talk this morning. The colonel, you know, was in the Custer fight."

"But I thought," said I, "that every white man in that battle was killed."

"Well, as far as Custer's command goes, you are right. Every white man was killed; only one person got away. He was a Crow Indian scout named Curle."

"But, you see, when Custer left Fort Lincoln in Dakota at the head of the seventh cavalry, he soon divided the command into three divisions. And at the battle of the Little Big Horn his command was still divided. One division was under Reno, another under Benteen and the third he himself led. The entire command consisted of 900 men, but Custer himself had only 213. Of these the Sioux killed 212."

"How did it happen? Well, it was like this: The Indians had been put on reservations. They did not like it. They had been used to going anywhere they pleased, and they much preferred hunting buffalo to eating beef which the government furnished them. They simply made a kick for freedom, and it was a good hard kick."

"Custer was sent after them. Reno's division first found trace of the enemy. Then the whole command followed the trail. Custer saw several camps a few miles apart. He thought that they were different camps of the same tribe. But it afterward turned out, when it was too late, that they were the camps of several tribes. Twelve to fifteen thousand Indians were on the war path; of warriors there were 2,500 to 3,000. You see when the Indians go to war they carry their families along—women and children and all. If there is an attack the backs keep the enemy back while the squaws take down the tepees and scatter."

"So you see Indian fights go usually by surprise. They take place early in the morning. Scouts find out where the Indians have their village. Then by forced night marching the command comes up so as to make a sunrise attack."

"The night before the battle—which was then not expected for two days—Custer called his officers together and asked their advice. This was something he had never done before. As the officers left the bivouac one of them remarked to a friend: 'Custer's scared; he's going to be killed.' And Mitch, an Indian scout, said to Colonel Godfrey: 'You look; tomorrow we have hell-uv-er fight.'"

"And so it was. On the following morning, June 25, '76, the command marched until half past ten. One of the pack mules got behind. A soldier was detailed to go back after the mule. He saw, as he drew near, an Indian breaking open the mule's pack with a tomahawk. This was the first enemy seen. The soldier came back to Custer and told him. Custer then said to Reno and Benteen: 'We must advance at once or they'll hear of us and get away.'"

"So Custer goes in advance. From the brow of a hill he could see down in the valley of the Little Big Horn river the camp of the Sioux."

"The river runs to the west. The valley is about a mile wide. At the edge of the valley on the north side rise up rather steep bluffs, cut in places by ravines."

"Custer advanced toward the village. He kept on top of the bluffs and back, so as not to be seen. He moved swiftly. He ordered Benteen to follow and kind of back him up. Reno, he told to get down into the valley of the Little Big Horn and attack the Indians."

"Reno went forward. He crossed the river. He advanced. Then every bush became an Indian yelling and pumping lead at him. Reno got scared. He ordered his men to dismount, then to mount, and to dismount again. He got rattled. He lost his hat. He emptied his revolver and threw them away. A soldier beside him fell. Then Reno jumped on his horse and lit out for the river and the bluffs, some of his men following him, others remaining hidden in the brush."

"Well, what do you think of Reno?" I asked.

"For publication," replied the major, "I would say that he was no Indian fighter, but my private opinion is that he was a damn coward."

"You see, if Reno had pressed forward, as Custer had planned, things would have been different. The whole force would have centered on the village. As it was the Indians all lit in on Custer, who was then about four miles ahead."

"Benteen and his division by this time had come up and rested on the bluffs. He was to await orders from Custer, who was ahead."

Reno and his men, some riding up the steep embankment in retreat. One of Reno's lieutenants came up and shook hands with Colonel Godfrey—who was with Benteen—and said: 'Godfrey, I'm glad to see you. We had a big fight and they licked us.' Reno had killed three officers and twenty-nine men."

"The divisions under Benteen and Reno now waited on the bluffs. The Indians had withdrawn from that part of the field. Down in the valley toward the village hundreds of warriors were riding to and fro at a rapid pace. What it all meant those on the bluffs did not know."

"The Indians were preparing an attack upon Custer. He had passed the head of a ravine which led

FIGHTS and FEUDS

Tattlings of a Retired Politician

By Forrest Crissey
Author of "A Country Boy"

BROKENSTRAW RANCH.

EAR NED—Bull courage has its place in politics, but unless liberally served with brains, it's a mighty dangerous commodity to have lying around loose in any political camp. The powder magazine or the dynamite cellar is the only safe place for the kind of political nerve that feeds on riot and rebellion and hungers for fights between men."

If I am not mistaken, Ned, your chief lieutenant is richly gifted with this sort of capacity for trouble and I want to give you a jolt that'll open your eyes before you put him in a place where he'll make a magnificent display of his surplus courage and leave you with a feud on your hands that can't be lived down in the course of a natural life-time."

There are some politicians—and some strong ones, too—who would rather stand put in a wrong cause and bullyrag and face down a righteous majority in a convention or a house than to be right and win out without any fight at all. And these are the men who, in a way, manage to infect a political camp with more sores than all the salves of diplomacy can heal in a quarter of a century."

When you find a politician who likes to display his steel-wire nerve better than a pretty matron loves to show her dimples, just cross him off your slates of possible campaign managers."

The man who has a secret passion for playing the Mephistopheles of the imperturbable countenance will indulge in this piece of dramatics at the most expensive moment so far as the interests of his associates are concerned. Indulge in the piece of dramatics to the most expensive moment so far as the interests of his associates are concerned."

Every man has his particular soft spot and the special besetting weakness of the sort of politician who appears to be an intellectual marvel and an emotional immune, is generally this tendency to make a show of his magnificent nerve. His only fear is that he may be thought capable of being afraid; his vanity is that of proving himself recklessly indifferent to the rights and opinions of others; his one vulnerable spot is his very imperturbability."

A bag of wet sand is a soft and yielding thing alongside a stick of hard wood timber, but a lot of us old soldiers can testify that sacks of soggy sand can stop more bullets than the barricade of hickory logs. And in politics, the man who has enough "give" in his make-up to be thoroughly human is more likely to stop the sharpshooter's balls of malice and less likely to stir up eternal enemies than the man who wears his face like a mask and would sooner appoint an enemy to office than allow an emotion to show itself on the front side of his countenance."

Perhaps you think I'm harping rather strong on the subject of belligerent nerve; but I once had this view

of the matter rubbed into me in a way that was considerably illuminating."

It was on the occasion of the first congressional convention I ever attended that this lesson was brought home to me in a way that raised my hair and made me think for the time being, that life in a frontier army post in the Indian country would be safe and peaceful pastime compared with politics."

The row began in the old district where I had been brought up with the determination of a gritty young lawyer with green eyes and an ambition like Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, to unseat old General Harnsworth, who had been the representative for so long that he had become a statesman and had fallen into the habit of forgetting to take care of the boys who were hungry for fat jobs."

These sore-heads concluded that the time had come to elect a politician instead of a statesman and so they started out to run a still hunt in the town caucuses. But the old general had held the whip hand so long that most of the staunch party men had been awed into the conviction that he was a sort of Gibraltar in the political landscape and could not be ousted by anything short of an earthquake; consequently, they were in the position of a lot of unruly school boys, who would like to throw out a school teacher, but didn't dare to tackle him."

Probably the revolt would have died out right at the start if it hadn't been for a few hot-heads, who led the opposition at Blackberry Corners. The caucus was called at St. Walte's little lumber office and Squire Sparks, the leader of the Regulars, opened proceedings with a few facetious remarks that rubbed the fur wrong way of the grain. Then a resolution was offered extolling the services of the distinguished statesman who had so long and ably represented the district in the national house of representatives and instructing the delegates to use every honorable means to secure his re-nomination."

A Circulating Medium.

(Exchange)

"Yea, sir," said the village grocer, "I take the big weeklies to keep track of the world's affairs and the big city dailies to keep posted on what is going on in this country."

"But don't you take your home papers?" asked the drummer.

"None."

"But you certainly ought to feel interested in local affairs."

"Oh, I know everything that goes on. My wife belongs to the woman's club and three church societies; one of my daughters works in the millinery shop, and the other is in the delivery window at the postoffice."

Every man in the opposition had a mighty strong pair of lungs and used them to full capacity in trying to yell down the resolution. But the squire declared it carried and then announced that the room would be cleared and the ballot box placed in the open window to receive the ballots for delegates."

Before the boys of the opposition could fairly catch their breath they were shoved out of the office and the door locked behind them. This was too much for the fiery temper of Patrick Henry Huggins, editor of the local paper and head and front of the opposition forces. He rallied his braves in the harness shop and after three minutes of consultation he led a flying wedge that would have put a modern football team to shame, drove through the crowds around the lumber office, kicked in the door himself and grabbed the ballot box. Five minutes later the sore-heads were holding a caucus of their own in the tavern, where they elected a full set of delegates, who were sworn not to eat or sleep until they had killed Paul. In other words, their dander was up to white heat, their wits were on edge and they started out to ride the county and get the old general's scalp. This little scrap was the spark in the tinder box and fired an amount of opposition sentiment which had not been thought possible by the Regulars."

One cunning old fox who had long nursed the feeling that his influence and importance had not been properly recognized by the old general told the other boys to do a little plain thinking and see if he could not stack the cards in a way that would bring results."

After due deliberation he decided that there was just one man in the county who was equal to the job that the opposition had in hand, for the reason that his nerves were sublime and he loved to fight a hopeless majority better than an old bound loves to follow the trail."

Figs and Thistles.

(Ram's Horn.)

The man who sighs for the days of the martyrs generally does it in an easy chair."

It is easier to be religious with your eloquence than it is to be eloquent with your religion."

"It might endanger the existence of the cold-storage church if the spirit of fire entered there."

Some men are praying God for a big harvest, but they don't think it worth while to enlarge the farm."

Some people think that God is waiting for them to die before he can decide on the plans for heaven."

This was old Hiram Donney, banker, note shaver and professional philanthropist. He had been too busy for some years collecting interest and cutting coupons to take any active part in politics, but after the situation was carefully explained to him he decided that here was a chance for some tall fun and an opportunity to show the people that he was not made of mush if he did devote a considerable part of his time to building hospitals and orphan asylums. Consequently, he smilingly agreed to do the work out of his own pocket he should be made chairman of the convention."

Because of his social standing, his financial prominence and his presumably neutral position in politics the Regulars readily agreed to the proposition that he should be named as temporary chairman of the convention. As the Regulars composed fully three-fourths of the delegates they had not the slightest fear that they would fail to have their own way from start to finish."

The proceedings were as smooth as a rainy day session of a Sunday school until the committee on credentials brought in its report. As its chairman sat down the editor from Blackberry Corners arose to his feet, held up in his hand a paper and began to stammer something which even those nearest him could not understand."

Right at that instant my eyes were studying the serene face of the philanthropic chairman. Except for a peculiar light that suddenly flashed up in his eyes and the shadow of a smile playing about the corners of his lips, his countenance did not show the slightest change as he quickly interrupted the delegates with the question:

"Do you move that the names you have read be substituted for those previously offered by the committee on credentials?"

"Yes," shouted back the delegate, who was answered by a second from another part of the hall."

Different Construction.

Rarebit Vet of The Hague had recently the misfortune to call a constable a monkey, an accusation which a local paper pointed out as "being, of course, untrue," and which, moreover, is a form of untruth not permitted in Holland. Vet was arrested and brought before the judge on a charge of "insulting the police," being sentenced to forty-five days' imprisonment. Before being removed he turned to address the court. Then he said: "Certainly not; you must not insult the police." The culprit reflected, "May I call monkey a constable?" he asked with a flash of genius. The judge shrugged his shoulders and, holding no brief for the animal, replied: "If it gives you any satisfaction." With a smile of gratification, Vet turned on his heel in the dock and bowed to his prosecutor. "Good-day, constable," he said.

down to the river valley—he had fallen into the trap. Between him and them was this chasm. Chief Gall with his band of Sioux went up the ravine, which was led to the east of Custer. Gray and Gray Horse led their warriors against him from the west. Custer was surrounded by at least 2,500 Indians. When the Indians attack, you know, they do so in a circling fashion. They ride round and round, sideways to the enemy, because it is harder to hit a man going sideways than coming straight at you. They ride closer in each time. This is the way they did Custer."

"Benteen's and Reno's men about this time heard two heavy volleys. They did not know then they were perhaps a distress signal. Nor did they know that the scattering shots that they heard afterward were reports from Winchester's of the Indians, who were shooting into the dead bodies of Custer's men. Soon they themselves had to make defense against an attack."

"The Indians, having done up Custer, now came in fury against Benteen and Reno. The Sioux completely surrounded the whites, but the whites had dug rifle pits and entrenched themselves behind their dead horses. The Indians fought until dark and withdrew. In their attack they killed or wounded seventy men."

"That night the soldiers slept on their arms. All now began to ask: 'Where's Custer?' The sentinels heard a wild din in the Indian village below; they saw the light of bonfires. Some guessed that the Indians were having a scalp dance and feared that the red devils were torturing prisoners."

"The next morning at dawn the Indians came back again and attacked Benteen and Reno. But during the night the whites had used their knives and tin cups and dug more pits and could stand them off. But they were beginning to suffer for water. The river was a mile away. Now, it's not a good thing to show the white feather to the Indian, so Reno and Benteen ordered an attack. Every man left the pits but one. This fellow was scared and cried like a baby. But the Indians were too strong and the soldiers soon had to hike back to their holes. Bullets from the Indians' Winchester's spit all around, but the only one that hit anybody put the lights out for the fellow who was afraid to leave the pits."

"Here's where Curle, the Crow Indian scout, comes in. When the Sioux got all around Custer, Curle saw that it was all off; so the first chance he got he slipped a blanket off a dead Sioux and made a sneak. The Sioux thought that he was one of them and let him get away. Curle went to the mouth of the Little Big Horn where General Terry was waiting with several hundred men. At first Curle could not make Terry understand. But after a while in some sticks and pointing to the sticks, said to Terry: 'Custer.' Then he threw the sticks into the river. Terry then knew that something had happened to Custer."

"Terry let Curle lead his force back to the battlefield. Meantime the Sioux, hearing that Terry was coming with more troops, skipped."

"The reinforcements did not stop at the Custer battlefield. They did not know but that the Indians had also killed the rest of Custer's command."

"There was great rejoicing on the bluffs when Benteen and Reno saw white soldiers advancing. They thought that Custer was coming. When they saw it was Terry's command they asked: 'Where's Custer?' The reply was: 'We have just counted 197 dead bodies back there on that hill; one of them was Custer.'"

"A peculiar thing about the massacre was that all of the soldiers except Custer were scalped and mutilated."

"That's strange," said I. "Why's that?"

"The Indians," concluded the major, "always respect a brave leader."

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He Got the Bicycle.

(Washington Post.)

Judge Rhea of Kentucky, in the Democratic cloak-room yesterday told what he called an "illustrating story."

"There was an old man in my town," said the Kentucky member, "who had three sons, each of whom wanted a bicycle. He couldn't afford to buy three bicycles, so he decided to buy one, allowing all the boys to use it, but making it the property of the one who would select the best name for the machine."

"When the bicycle arrived he called the boys into the yard and told them that each should take a ride, following which he should christen the machine. The oldest boy rode first, and, dismounting at the water trough, sprinkled the new wheel with water, announcing: 'I christen thee George Washington, the father of our country.'"

"The old man thought this was pretty good, but when the second boy had taken his turn, and had announced, 'I christen thee Abraham Lincoln, who died that men might be free,' the father was still better pleased."

"Not much was expected from the youngest boy, and, in fact, he had considerable trouble with his trial ride. His legs were so short that he could hardly reach the pedals, and he wasn't able to steer at all, the wheel bouncing over rocks and running into trees and fences. He was pretty well disgusted when he reached the watering trough, and, seizing a bucket, he gave the wheel a good soaking, making his announcement at the time:

"I christen thee Theodore Roosevelt," he said, "because nobody can tell in what blunder direction you're going to go."

"The youngest boy got the bicycle," Judge Rhea declared.

Instantly the convention was changed into a human cyclone. Every delegate was on his feet and the whole assemblage crowded forward toward the speaker. Big Town Fairchild, who stood six feet four in his stockings and weighed about three hundred pounds, made a dash for the chairman, swinging him up and yelling: "Mob the scoundrel! Throw him out!" Dutch John, the boss of Little Germany, jumped into a chair and began to talk in English, but the words would not come out fast enough so he babbled in German, and, with his tongue, just at that minute I chanced to notice that the sheriff, a brother-in-law of the chairman, stepped quickly to the platform, stood close to the distinguished philanthropist, and reached his right hand around to his hip pocket. The mob in front of the chairman all noticed this ominous move and fell back a little."

With a smile on his lips and a gleam of hate in his eyes that made me think of Dante's picture of the Devil, the chairman put the resolution to vote. The shout of the nays made the room shake and demonstrated that the Regulars were in immense majority, but, in a voice as clear and serene as if he were leading family prayers, the chairman announced: The "ayes" have it; the resolution is carried."

Once more the convention broke into a howling rage: a dozen men near me were actually sobbing and crying. "Kill him; pound him; cane him from the Regulars. The only man not beside himself with excitement was the chairman, who instantly put through a motion that the temporary organization of the convention be made permanent."

Well, Ned, to make it short, the man of iron nerve made a new congressman, a new state senator and a new machine, but not one of them lasted beyond a single term. He made something else, however, that has lasted more than twenty years. The party feud he started that day has never been healed and bids fair to survive into the second and third generations. To be sure, the old man made a party history with a vengeance, and gave himself a notorious place in the political traditions of the district for time to come, but most of the men who were mixed up in that fight have ever since been busy trying to square themselves with the people and live down their indiscretion."

But just as sure as one of them shows his head in a built for office some one with a long memory comes forward and remarks that "the ayes have it." That settles him."

This, and a score of other experiences along the same line make me a little cautious about elevating a man whose vanity is along the line of his nerve. Just a simple little fight in politics is all right, and adds spice to the game, but a feud that rages for a quarter of a century is a good thing to steer clear of. So, I repeat, don't give your belligerent lieutenant that chance to show off his bull courage at a cost of a perpetual enmity that will be visited upon your head instead of his own."

WILLIAM BRADLEY.

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